

# Christopher Lish

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Subject: Please strengthen Alaska's oil spill prevention and response rules -- Oil Discharge Prevention and Contingency Plan Public Scoping

Dear Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Specialist Mr. Robinson,

I support strengthening Alaska's oil spill prevention and response rules, which are vitally important regulations that help ensure that oil stays out of Alaska waters and off of Alaska's coastlines.

"Our duty to the whole, including to the unborn generations, bids us to restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wildlife and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose and method."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

Alaska's oil spill prevention and response regulations were put in place after the Exxon Valdez oil spill—which spilled roughly 11 million gallons of oil into the ocean, killing and injuring seabirds, sea otters, harbor seals, bald eagles, orcas, and other marine wildlife. In the days that followed, the oil spread, contaminating more than 1,300 miles of Alaska's coastline.

Current regulations make shipping safer in Alaska and have helped to prevent another devastating accident.

These regulations are important for:

- \* Alaskans who practice subsistence hunting and fishing and who rely on the ocean as an important source of healthy uncontaminated food, including Indigenous peoples who rely on fish and marine mammals for food security, health and as part of traditional cultural practices dating back thousands of years;
- \* Commercial fishermen whose livelihoods depend on Alaska's reputation for clean ocean waters;
- \* Recreational fisherman who come to the state to fish for salmon, halibut, and other game fish;
- \* Tourists who visit Alaska to see the state's outstanding marine wildlife and scenery;
- \* Residents of Alaska who have a deep connection to the state's waters and coastlines; and
- \* Wildlife that live in or migrate through Alaska's waters.

Many Alaskans depend directly on a healthy and vibrant marine ecosystem, and all Americans recognize Alaska for its magnificent ocean and coasts. It's in all of our interests to prevent spills and to ensure prompt effective spill response. We cannot put our ocean at risk of another Exxon Valdez tragedy.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should

strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish--indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore--from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

If the State of Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation chooses to revise the spill prevention and response rules, it should ensure that any proposed changes would not weaken protections that safeguard the marine environment. From subsistence and food security to commercial fisheries and tourism, clean waters and coasts are vital to the state, and the Department of Environmental Conservation should not dilute protections.

If the Department of Environmental Conservation chooses to revise the spill prevention and response rules, it should focus on strengthening protection of the marine environment and adjacent coastal areas. One way to do this would be to take steps to ensure that oil spills do not happen in the first place. When it comes to oil spills in marine waters, prevention is much more effective than response.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Lish  
San Rafael, CA